



The Chain of Concern

July/August 2005

The Maine National Guard Family Program Newsletter

Thank You Associated Grocers, Maine Turnpike Authority and Wal-Mart



The Maine Turnpike Authority Widening project contractors felt overwhelmed to see busses of soldiers come and go across their working area over the past year and graciously collected several thousand dollars worth of phone cards recently. Bruce Pelletier and BG(R) Adams presented these phone cards which will be sent to the 152 Maint as well as given to small groups as they leave the State of Maine on deployment. Thank you so much!



On the sunny first day of summer, over 200 golfers spent the day at Natanis Golf Course in Vassalboro to help three great causes: Make A Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House and the Maine National Guard Foundation Fund. Associated Grocers presented a check for over \$32,000 which will be split between the three groups! What a Great Day for All!!! The guard had their very own representatives, SFC Mowry, SGT Chabot, SFC Dill, and SGT Humiston from Co B, 133d Engr Bn. These fine soldiers came in second in their division making us all very proud. Many thanks to Associated Grocers, the fine sponsors and the soldiers who participated. The money donated is used directly for soldiers and families who face financial hardships due to emergency situations.

Thanks to Wal-Mart of Waterville who presented a check to the State Family Program for \$1,000 in June. The new store's grand opening in April was great and will add value to their community. The funds they presented will help with the MENG Youth Program as we have close to 200 kids attending camp this year!!!

Marriage Enrichment Weekend

Because of the great success of the PREP Marriage Enrichment weekends that we have hosted in Portland and Bangor, we have added an additional opportunity for Military couples to attend. To learn more about what PREP training consist of, please visit our website at www.me.ngb.army.mil/family. Below are the basics of how to attend this enrichment weekend.

Where: Bar Harbor Regency, Bar Harbor, Maine

When: 17 & 18 September 2005 (Travel Day will be Friday, 16 September)

Training will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and 9:00 - 12:30 on Sunday.

How:

1. Family Member spouses will be placed on an Invitational Travel Order which will reimburse for hotel, mileage and Per Diem (food). They must contact Jen Benson at Jennifer.Benson@me.ngb.army.mil or by calling her at 430-2005 to register. You will need to provide Jen with spouse/significant others full name, address and social security number.
2. You (the family member) will need to call the hotel at 1-800-234-6835 to reserve your room and tell them you are with the MENG Marriage Enrichment Program. The rate is \$116 plus taxes. You will be reimbursed after the weekend via a travel claim which we will provide at the class. (It takes approximately 10 days after the weekend to receive payment)
3. Army Soldiers may be placed on Active Duty orders only if they submit their request thru their unit no later than 15 July using PM 3J0 TDC R01.
4. Air Guard members need to go through their unit to discuss military funding.
5. Dual military families can not attend on an invitational order however, please call us specifically to see how we may be able to help you attend with reimbursement.

Other information you should know:

1. This is a training weekend for couples. Please plan to arrange for childcare outside the hotel, as this is a time for you to dedicate to you as a couple.
2. Dress is casual. Be comfortable.
3. All meals will be on your own with reimbursement thru per diem. There are some wonderful places to enjoy in Bar Harbor.
4. Attendance to ALL sessions is mandatory in order to get the most out of the weekend and to be reimbursed.
5. Friday is a travel day to allow sufficient time to in process at 8:30 Saturday morning.

Here's what some of the participants had to say about the weekend:

- I learned some great techniques to communicate not only with my spouse but with co-workers and my family. Tonya and Ron Cyr
- The PREP program gives you the tools to develop open lines of communications with your spouse. Michael Steinbuchel
- I had an excellent weekend and learned a lot. The techniques we learned are going to be useful in dealing with our every day issues. Chris and Kelly Sirois

STATE FAMILY PROGRAM WORKSHOP

Once a year we have our State Family Readiness Program Workshop. This year's workshop will be held on August 26-28th at the Sunday River Resort in Bethel. The workshop has a variety of topics, speakers, and interactive learning exercises as well as a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to meet, share their successes and discuss how to improve and expand your unit programs.

The Family Readiness Program will reimburse volunteer for mileage, tolls, hotel and meals (meals are only reimbursed if no meal is provided by the workshop). Child care will also be provided.

If you are interested in attending this year's workshop, please contact your unit coordinator.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email me the State Family Program Office at 1-800-581-9989, or 626-4410 or you can email either Robin Walsh at robin.walsh@me.ngb.army.mil or SFC Barbara Claudel at barbara.claudel@me.ngb.army.mil. Hope to see you in August.

Family Readiness Groups



FRG DEFINITION AND MISSION

The Family Readiness Group, formerly known as the Family Support Group (FSG), is a concept that had early roots among Army families, who banded together during war or tours overseas or other isolated locations, to provide information, moral support, and social outlets to their members. The Army focused sharply on family readiness as a result of lessons learned during the 1990-91 Gulf War. On 1 June 2000, Department of the Army renamed it Family Readiness Group to emphasize the need for readiness and self-sufficiency among Army families in the modern Army.

Paraphrasing DA Pamphlet 608-47, the FRG is "an organization of family members, volunteers, soldiers, and civilian employees belonging to a unit/organization who together provide an avenue of mutual support and

assistance and a network of communication among the members, the chain of command, and community resources." Unit FRGs consist of all assigned and attached Guardsmen (married and single), their spouses, and children. This membership is automatic, and participation is voluntary. Extended families, fiancées, boy/girlfriends, retirees, DA civilians, and even interested community members can and should be included, as well.

The FRG mission is "to assist commanders in maintaining readiness of soldiers, families, and communities within the Army and Air Guard by promoting self-sufficiency, resiliency, and stability during peace and war." The Kansas National Guard Family Program's mission is "to contribute to *readiness* and *retention* in the Kansas Army and Air National Guard and to enhance the *quality of life* for all guard members, their families and the communities in which they live."

The FRG and the Military Mission



Commanders and other leaders at all levels and spouses in leadership roles should be keenly aware that FRGs can help build better unit families and can help with military missions, as well. How could this be true? Simply put, well-organized and effective FRGs help improve morale among soldiers/airmen and their families. In turn, soldiers/airmen and their leaders are more focused on their missions, safer, and not as worried about their families when the unit is training or engaged in real-world missions.

For more information, or to participate in a Family Readiness Group contact your unit or the State Family Readiness Coordinator Robin Walsh 207-430-2132 or 207-272-4526 Robin.walsh@me.ngb.army.mil

Welcome New Unit Volunteers

240th Engineer Group
Jennifer Howe

286th POL BN
Ellen Otsott

1136th Transportation
Leann Farley
Marguerite Cannon

152nd Maintenance Co
Sharon Rideout
Linda Emonds
Lynn Fortin

Family Assistance Center Coordinators

Call the Toll Free number
1-888-365-9287

Gerald Soucy
Caribou
Kerry Birmingham
Augusta
Cory Goodell
Portland

The Family Assistance Center, or F.A.C. for short, was established by the Maine National Guard through assistance from the National Guard Bureau for the support of deployed soldier's families. While the FAC was established to help Maine National Guard Soldiers, no military personnel, regardless of their branch affiliation, will be turned away. This includes any Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines or Coast Guard family.

The need was recognized for a support and referral system to help ease the stress and burden that those left behind experience.

The FAC is available for any situation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Remember the Family Program office is not open on the weekends and e-mail is not the most efficient way to reach FAC or the Program office if you have an emergency. Please CALL the FAC Toll free number if you have an emergency and want assistance.

The FAC is a focal point to coordinate available resources, such as Chaplain Services, Red Cross, Veterans Administration, and a host of other agencies with direct and indirect interests in assisting and supporting military families.

The FAC provides a variety of support to families from discussion groups, to food pantries, to children's activities. During the mobilization, the FAC is the family's point of contact for help with any type of problem. A telephone call to the FAC trained staff and volunteers will either help solve the problem or direct individuals to the appropriate program or agency.

State Family Program Office
1-800-581-9989

Barbara Claudel – 626-4410
State Family Program Director

Robin Walsh – 430-2132
State Family Readiness Assistant

Jen Benson – 430-2005
Finance Manager

Adam Knoblach – 626-4384
Youth Coordinator



KIDS AND YOUR DEPLOYMENT

Mission first and personal readiness! We all need to remember; the kids in our lives never volunteered for either. Whether they are missing a deployed parent, celebrating the return of a soldier, or waiting for the day their parent will get called, these kids are feeling tremendous emotional tugs and as a military family, we all have to realize they are being affected by the War on Terror. **Operation: Military Kids (OMK)** was created to help the “suddenly military” kids in our lives, the normal boys and girls that suddenly became children of deployed guard member. The challenge is to reach out to these kids and see what we can do to help. Our OMK program has several events in the near future, which include Whitewater rafting June 30th -July 1st as well as Youth Camp in Bog Brook. The key for OMK is to reach out to kids and their communities and get the message out that these kids are going through some serious changes due to deployments, and there are things that can help. We will be hosting Speak Out events, where Guard teens introduce civic leaders and social organizations to the unique challenges military kids face.

Our Challenge to you:

Talk to your kids and find out what is on their mind. Even if you're home now, that doesn't mean that things are “back to normal.” They will have questions they haven't asked, or are afraid to ask.

CONTEST FOR KIDS

We are asking Maine Military Kids to send us in a letter, no more than 100 words, telling us what makes their Military Parent so special. This is open for all children of a Maine Guard Soldier or Airman. All children will receive a gift for submitting their letter, but 3 will be selected to win a gift certificate so they may take their special parent out to dinner.

(MAIL BY 7/15) TO: DVEM, Family Program: Adam Knoblach, State House Station #33, Camp Keyes, Augusta, Me 04333-0033



YOUTH CAMP 2005

This looks like another awesome Youth Camp experience. Our staffers are pumped and ready to go. We have many veteran staffers as well as some newcomers. The dates for the OMK Youth Camp 2005 is 17-23 July or 24-30 July 2005. See you there!!! Check out the Youth Camp webpage for schedules, directions, pictures and everything else. http://www.knoblachmountain.com/Maine_Military_Kids/youthcamp.html

Our OMK Webpage

www.me.ngb.army.mil/family Click on the OMK Button at the top of the page. WE WANT YOUR IDEAS. What do you want to see on it, what kinds of information do you feel would benefit you as a military youth? Let me know.

J Adam Knoblach. 626-4384 or john.knoblach@me.ngb.army.mil

Messages from Unit Volunteer Coordinators

152 Maintenance Co – Linda Emonds

Family Support Meetings as follows:

Location	Meeting Information	Location of Meeting	Contact
Augusta	Heroes at Home (3 rd Thursday of the month @6pm	Augusta Armory	Lynn Fortin
Caribou	Meet and Greet 2 ND Sunday of the month at 1:00pm	Caribou Armory	Carolyn Hildebrand & Rita Zbylut
Bangor	Pizza Party - June 30 6-8 pm	AFRC	Sharon Rideout
Portland	2 nd Wednesday of the month at 6:00	Stevens Ave. Armory	Linda Newbegin

Babysitting will be provided

***A request was made for a Waterville Support Group, but we need to have someone volunteer to start it up and run it each month-Please contact Linda Emonds @ 837-8831

UPCOMING EVENTS:

4TH of July Parade in Augusta

What: 4th of July parade

Where: Augusta – begins at Capitol Shopping Center & will go down Western Avenue, down Water Street and end at City Center.

Time: The decorating begins at 7:00 at the Armory

The parade begins at 11:00am

You did not need to help with the planning or decorating in order to ride

Rank Soldier Name
152nd Maintenance Company
APO AE 09344

NOTE THE CHANGE TO THIS ADDRESS

If you bought T-Shirts don't forget to wear them. For those of you who did not order a shirt, if we have

UNIT PICNIC: The VFW in Augusta would like to invite us to have our annual picnic there. This will be on the first Sunday in August (August 7th) at 12:00 noon although this is not where we usually have the picnic; the nice people at the VFW have offered to provide the food for the picnic, as they have adopted the 152nd Maintenance Company and their families. Word from Iraq is that they would still like the families at home to get together and have an annual picnic.

A head count is needed to assure that the folks at the VFW will have enough food. Remember, this is not just for immediate family. You are welcome to invite Mom & Dad, Sister & Brother, Friend and of course older dependents. This is a family event! It would be nice to have a good turn out to show our appreciation to the wonderful people at the VFW who are graciously doing this to support us.

If you have any questions or concerns, or want to RSVP please contact Linda Emonds 837-8831 or Lynn Fortin 445-3826

WHAT TO SEND TO OUR SOLDIERS: m&m's, they hold up well with the heat, big cans of 4C ice tea mix, canned fruit cocktail, power bars, protein powder, and of course beef jerky. Baby wipes, the small packets of 20-30 work well, you can keep them in your side pocket. Pictures, DVD's, an old comforter (one that you don't mind losing), pictures that your children have drawn, a doormat, letters, stationary, envelopes (no stamps), no chocolate until about December, cookies with pieces of bread to keep them moist, food that does not require much preparation (keep in mind that they might not have a microwave), jerky, their favorite chips, chap stick, SPF 45 sun block, razors, under armour shirts can make a big difference in the heat, but not everyone likes them- \$25.00 each as these replace the army brown t-shirt (can obtain them through www.rangerjoes.com under item #8597 and the loose fitting ones - \$30.00 (#8936), LED Keychain (- \$7.00 #9598)leatherman/gerber/sog, 3 pointslings (#9616-01), swiffers, mMP3 players, books, gameboys, digital cameras, TOYS (The 133rd had fun with the Remote control cars), batteries. The most treasured was the pictures, cards, letters and drawn pictures. Please touch base with your soldier to find out what their stock is as cases of things were left behind such as baby wipes, powered Gatorade, baby powder and etc. I know from the message I received from the Commander was that they were heavily supplied with powered Gatorade. Be creative and know that you don't have to spend a whole lot of money and it will be appreciated. We can add on to this list as we obtain information from our soldiers but this is a starter.

Linda

Unless it states otherwise, you do not have to be from the 152nd to attend any activity you do not have to restrict yourself to the area in which you live You and the people who support you may attend. Come one, Come all!

152 Maintenance Co – Lt Chris Elgee

Soldiers and families of the 152nd Maintenance Company,

For those of you I haven't yet been able to meet, I'm the new rear detachment commander here in Augusta. That basically means that I'm here to do whatever I can to help out the soldiers overseas and their families back in the States. Additionally, I'm responsible for training and supervising the soldiers in the unit who are not currently deployed. Please feel free to contact me via email at Christopher.elgee@me.ngb.army.mil, office phone at 626-4515, or cell phone at 272-7187. I hope you all make it to the 4th of July parade!

-LT Chris Elgee

1/152 Field Artillery - Lisa Nichols, Battalion Rep.

On Sunday, June 5th, soldiers and family members gathered together to attend the Freedom Salute. This ceremony was the formal recognition of the 152 FA Forward soldiers who served in Iraq. Soldiers were welcomed home and thanked for their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom by Governor Baldacci, Congressional Representatives, Gen. Libby, and American Legion Representatives.

As I looked around the audience, I could not help but notice all the smiling, proud faces. Our soldiers were asked to leave their families, jobs, and homes to serve their country for over a year. They did a great job and we can be very proud of their military service and accomplishments. **THANK YOU 1/152 FA FORWARD SOLDIERS!!!**

Several times, the guest speakers mentioned the family members left behind – how difficult it was for them to be separated from their loved ones. Our families showed strength and courage during the deployment. Many families bonded, supported each other, and formed new friendships. It has been said behind successful soldiers are supportive, happy families. That is certainly true in the Field Artillery. The sacrifices made by our soldiers and families during the deployment are greatly appreciated and will not be forgotten any time soon.

Len Hanson, UVC for Calais, was given the Unit Center of Influence Award. He received a bronze minuteman statue for his dedicated service to the Calais FRG and for his outstanding support of the unit's families during the deployment. Congratulations Len!! You did, and continue to do, a great job as UVC for Calais. THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SERVICE AND SUPPORT.

The following is a listing of drill dates for the Field Artillery.

July 9 – 10	All Batteries
August 5 – 7	HHS
August 12-14	A & B Batteries
August 19 – 21	C Battery
September 10 – 11	All Batteries

If you would like to volunteer for the Family Program, have a suggestion or concern; please feel free to contact your local Unit Volunteer Coordinator.

Have a safe and happy 4th of July

152nd FA - Kristin Hickey

Happy summer to all! Our family program has been staying low since the return of our soldiers in February, this was to provide all of you with the chance to get reacquainted and not have interruptions of phone calls and meetings. Now that life is getting back to "normal", we will be starting up our events and activities. As you all know, A-btry family program was quite inactive prior to deployment, so during deployment we really pulled together and did the best we could while trying to create an organization. We are now at a crucial point in the development of our program. This is when we need input and feedback. At some point soldiers and their families will be asked to complete a feedback sheet about the program and what we could do differently to improve our program to make it more helpful to everyone. This is what we will rely on to build and change our program to meet your needs. We are working on a new office space in the armory, where we will provide flyers and brochures and other important information. We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you are interested please contact me at Kristin.hickey@maine.edu.

152/FA - Ruth Barnes

To the soldiers deployed from our unit in Oklahoma and to those deployed that are with the 152nd Maintenance - we are thinking of you and your families. Keep up the good work and stay in touch.

Happy Independence Day!

Co B 133d Engineer Battalion - Lynn Lewis and Donna Dee

Hello Soldiers and families,

We hope you all have had a great spring despite the weather and mosquitoes! We are coming up on some exciting events in the next few months...

First in July will be the Freedom Salute on the 24th. This is a formal recognition for the soldiers and families of the 133rd. All are invited, family, friends, co-workers, retired military personal and the general public. Anyone and everyone who wants to recognize the fantastic work the soldiers did during the deployment. The event will be held at the Augusta Civic Center so seating should not be a problem. The start time is set for 1300 (1:00pm) and is expected to run until about 1530 (3:30pm) Childcare is available for this event; however kids are welcome to take part in the event if they wish. If you would like to take advantage of the childcare, please respond to Linda Newbegin at newbeginmeng@xpressamerica.net. With numbers and ages of the children. Or call her at 207-650-2796

August brings us to our "BIG PARTY"!!!!!! After many months of planning and hard work by many people it's finally time to let our hair down and relax. August 13, 2005 at the Holiday Inn By The Bay in Portland, B Co will enjoy a great evening together. Starting at 1700 (5:00pm) with a social hour followed by dinner, dancing and some entertainment. This event is well deserved by the soldiers and family members who did such a great job during a long deployment. HOOHA to all of us!!!!

Also the 2005 Maine State Family Program Conference will be held the 26-28th of August. This conference will again be held at the beautiful Grand Summit Conference Center, Sunday River Resort, in Bethel. This is a great opportunity for unit volunteers to get some valuable training that could be helpful to family members and soldiers. If you are key caller, unit volunteer or would like the opportunity to become one and you would like to attend this conference, please contact SFC Barbara Claudel at (207) 626-4410.

In closing we wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing you all at a few of the events. Enjoy your summer!!!

Warm Regards,

Lynn Lewis & Donna Dee, co-coordinators B co FRG

Co C, 133d Engr Bn - Tammy Haskell

On Saturday July 9th at 6:30pm at the Lewiston Armory we will have our scrapbook/craft evening. We do this on the drill hall floor so the kids are welcome to come and play as well or make it your evening out.

The Freedom Salute is on Sunday July 24th at 1:00 at the Augusta Civic center. Come honor your soldier. We can not start arriving til 11:45, so plan accordingly. For more information on this event and many more please check out the FAC website www.me.ngb.army.mil/family

On August 5th at 6:30pm at the Lewiston Armory we will have our Come Together meeting. Come see what the unit is doing and help plan future events

Notes from Tammy

The Cruise of Casco Bay is all set for July 30th from 4pm to 8pm. This is for the soldier and one guest (due to the size of the boat) Come dance to music by DJ, Bob Barcelou and enjoy food provided by York's Catering. Please RSVP to Tammy at mhaskell@nlis.net or 892-0284 no later than July 18th. Provide the soldier's name and guest. Watch your mail for a flyer.

We have had to cancel our August Family Day at the Great Outdoors; instead we are going to buy Funtown tickets for Co C soldiers and their immediate family only. If you are interested in these ticket please RSVP no later than July 11th to Priscilla Hebert at phebert@megalink.net or Tammy Haskell at mhaskell@nlis.net. We need to know the soldier's name and how many tickets.

So that we may continue to keep you informed please let me know if you have an address, phone number or e-mail change.

If you would like me to add your soldier to the list forward his/her information to me as well. Another great spot to get up to date information is the FAC (Family Assistant Center) website. www.me.ngb.army.mil/family. You can get information like freebies, events, etc.

I will be stepping down from the position of the Unit Family Volunteer Coordinator after the August 5th Come Together meeting.

I would like to thank all of you for your support this last year however, it is time for me to move on. Priscilla Hebert has agreed to give it a go as the Unit Family Volunteer Coordinator. You can contact her at phebert@megalink.net or by phone at 966-2900. I will still be around for awhile to help Priscilla. Please don't hesitate to contact either of us with any questions.

Tammy

HSC, 133d Engr Bn – Judy Dix

Hello to everyone in HSC..Welcome Home ... Hope everyone is doing okay and everyone is well. We have not been having our monthly meetings this summer .. We will start having them again when the summer months are over. We will be having pot luck with the meetings and it will be more of a social time for everyone to get together and have fun. Don't forget to mark the calendar for July 24th this is the Freedom Salute day. Information will be sent out for you to read. August 28th, 2005 is the family picnic at Sebago state park. It opens up at 9 AM, and we have reserved 5 spots for the BBQ. More information will be given out at the drills. So mark this day also for the Family Picnic August 28. I hope everyone can make this event and we all have fun. It will be great to see each other again. Until then take care..

Co A 133d Engineer Battalion – Tracy Smith

Well everyone should be back to their everyday routines now and soon we will be having our soldiers going back to their once a month drill periods. I just want to remind everyone that even though our soldiers are home the state family assistance program still has alot of things being offered to the soldiers and their families so continue to watch the state website at www.me.ngb.army.mil/family.

I hope that everyone has had a great time with their soldiers and now that school is out, hopefully we will have some great weather this summer so that we can do all the things we wanted to do with them last year now. Sorry guys this summer you can't get out of mowing the lawn. We have some fun things coming up in the next month. By now you all should have received an invitation to our Company A party which will be on July 23rd at Champions in Waterville. We need to get the rsvp card back as soon as possible so that we can give the caterer a head count. The evening will be alot of fun, we have as I have just mentioned a catered meal, and a d.j. for the evening. We also have a list of local hotels in the area for those that would like to stay the night. If you are interested in the hotel list please just email me with either a number or email address so that I can get back to you. On July 24th the Freedom Salute is being held in Augusta at the Augusta Civic Center.

Soon I hope we will be getting a meeting together to see what else people would like to see happen for events and to start on the planning for a Halloween party and the Christmas party. I would also like to see about keeping our phone tree going and for those that have done the phone tree in the past that would like to continue or for those that would like to get involved please feel free to contact me at giwife@gwi.net. For those who don't know what a phone tree is it is a way for us to keep in contact with the families in Company A to let you know about special events that may be offered and to also be a means to keep in contact with our families if anyone needs anything. I would like to update our email listings for families contacts so that I can email you all the good deals and information that is being offered for our families and soldiers. If you could email me back with an updated email address or just email me with your email address so that I can either add you to my current list or update the address that I currently have it would be greatly appreciated.

I hope that everyone has a great summer and hope to see you all at the Company A party. I would like to also thank everyone who helped out with our homecoming celebration for our soldiers and to those that helped us out with all our events and fundraising efforts. Everyone did a spectacular job and to our soldiers I would like to congratulate you with a job well done. You all made us proud to be the families of the 133rd Engineer Battalion. I also want to say a huge thank you to Michelle Steward and to Mike Gallant, with out you two we wouldn't have had as wonderful a family program or the amount of events that we had. Thank you very much.

Sgt Harold Gray has been moved to a long term facility to help with his rehabilitation. We are providing you with his address if you would like to send get well cards.

**SGT Harold Gray
James A. Haley VA Hospital
13000 Bruce Downs Blvd #131
Tampa, FL 33612**

BENEFITS

TRICARE Triage

New! TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)

TRICARE Reserve Select is a new premium-based TRICARE health plan offered for purchase by certain members and former members of the Reserve Component* (RC) and their families, if specific eligibility requirements are met.

TRS coverage is available to eligible RC members who were called or ordered to active duty, under Title 10, in support of a contingency operation on or after September 11, 2001. RC Members and their Reserve Component unit will need to agree for the member to stay in the Select Reserve for one or more whole years to qualify.

TRS coverage must be purchased. **TRS** members pay a monthly premium for health care coverage (for self-only or for self and family). Adjusted effective Jan 1st each year, the premiums for calendar year 2005 are:

\$75.00 for TRS member-only coverage

\$233.00 for TRS member and family coverage.

More information can be found at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

Soldiers should be briefed on this benefit during demobilization. For those soldiers that demobilized prior to April 26, 2005 please consult the website for information.

Elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan "Widow's Tax"

The FY 2005 National Defense Authorization Act eliminates the Survivor Benefit Plan "Widow's Tax".

Under the SPB, a retiree pays a premium so that the surviving spouse can collect 55% of the

retiree's pension after the retiree dies. The 55% amount was reduced to 35% when the surviving spouse turned 62 and collected Social Security.

Under the new law, the Social Security offset is phased out starting in 2005. Here is the phase-out schedule:

From September 2005 through March 2006, the spouse will receive 40%.

From April 2006 through March 2007, the spouse will receive 45%.

From April 2007 through March 2008, the spouse will receive 50%.

From April 2008 on, the spouse will receive 55% of the retirees pension.

Many retirees opted not to buy into SBP because of the Social Security offset. Therefore, the Congress has authorized an "open season" for retirees who may now want to buy into SBP. The open enrollment period begins October 2005 and last for one year only. Premiums will be based on a formula that includes the total amount of premiums that would have been paid had the retiree initially enrolled, plus interest, plus any other reasonable additional fees deemed necessary by the Secretary of Defense.

Since this is a major change to the Survivor Benefit Plan, each individual is likely to have questions about his or her specific circumstance. According to the SBP expert at HQ Army, DoD has not yet issued any guidance on implementation of the changes and officials anticipate it will be Spring before details are sent out. Members are encouraged to periodically check the Army's webpage at: www.Armyg1.army.mil and click on retirement services. Because this is a DoD program, information will be consistent across the services.

ACTIVITIES



Heart to
Heart

What is Heart 2 Heart? These are groups of family, friends and service members who come together to support each other through the full cycle of deployment. The groups do

not do fund raising or plan events, we focus on taking care of each other, while having fun and making friends. Please join us.

Portland – Stevens Avenue Armory at 6:30pm on June 13

For recently **deployed** Soldiers families – ***RSVP is a must or the meeting will be cancelled. Please RSVP to:***

Linda Newbegin at 650-2796 or email newbeginmeng@xpressamerica.net.

Portland – Stevens Avenue Armory at 6:30pm on June 20

For recently **returned** Soldiers and their families – ***RSVP is a must or the meeting will be cancelled. Please RSVP to:***

Linda Newbegin at 650-2796 or email newbeginmeng@xpressamerica.net.

Augusta - We are currently looking for someone to take over leadership for the Heart to Hear Group. If you are interested in this role, please contact Jo Hersom at jhersom@mainehousing.org

EGG FESTIVAL IN PITTSFIELD



The Pittsfield Kiwanis Carnival Committee and the Pittsfield Egg Festival Committee would like to invite All Maine Military Members and their dependants to the Egg Festival in Pittsfield, ME, on Friday, July 22 from 600 PM to 1000 PM. All Service Members and their Dependants will receive free Bracelets that will entitle them to go on the rides, provided by Smokey's Greatest Shows, that evening. This is to say, "Thanks" to all the service men and women, and their families, who have dedicated their lives to keeping us free. It is only good for that night.

FREE ADMITTANCE ON FRIDAY FROM 6-10 PM – JUST SHOW ID CARD

Scrapbooking

Augusta Armory

6-10 PM

**EVERY 1ST AND 3RD FRIDAY
EVERYONE WELCOME!!!**

**FOR QUESTION, PLEASE
CONTACT**

LYNN FORTIN AT 445-3826

ROCKCLIMBING

July 1st Rock Rats Climbing Center in Union on RT 17 would like to kick off the 4th of July weekend with a half price day for all military personnel and their families. DATE: July 1 from 1-9pm. Just show your ID, have some fun and make -a few new friends.

If you have questions, please contact Sheryl Murphy at: 547-4624 or murphmind@yahoo.com

YMCA Host a Picnic for Military Families

The Kennebec Valley YMCA is hosting a picnic for all military families at the the YMCA Camp in Readfield. There will be food, drinks, swimming, games and prizes and lots of fun!

Date: Saturday, 9 July 2005
Time: Noon - 3 p.m.
What to Bring: Swimsuit & towels

Please RSVP to the Family Assistance Center no later than 6 July so we can plan properly for food. 1-888-365-9287 For directions, go to our website at www.me.ngb.army.mil/family

SPECIAL OFFERS

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Put your name & address (or someone else's) on a Business Size Envelope (#10 long envelope) (You may include as many envelopes as you wish, but they request that each envelope be sent to a different address) ALSO put YOUR name & address in the upper left-hand corner Put on 2 First Class Stamps Fold the envelope and insert it into another envelope and mail it to:

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Magic Falls Rafting 1-800-207-7238
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www.neoc.com

Also, here are a couple of sites you may want to check out:
www.militarycity.com and click on salute

www.militaryspousemagazine.com
for a neat magazine subscription.

OF INTEREST ARTICLES

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN

Check out this site for a chance to apply for a \$1500 scholarship

for your Childs higher education:
www.militaryscholar.org

"Freedom of the Press Does Not Supersede Freedom of Speech"

By: CSM Paul E. Luce

I approached SFC Barbara Claudel last week to lobby for a little space in your respective family newsletters to address protocol and options should any of you be contacted by the media. When she dropped her head to track a fallen pencil, I took that as a nod of approval; so, here goes.

The War on Terrorism has created a media climate that's ripe with opportunities for news. From mobilizations to redeployments and everything in between, there's plenty of news to go around. Some of it's exciting, promising, and hopeful; yet, some is unsettling, sad, and terribly tragic. It's within this climate that good reporters thrive. You see; good

Reporters report the news. With sensitivity and understanding, they do their best to gather information, analyze it properly, and use God-given wisdom to inform the public about events. It's also in this climate that some reporters teeter the pillars of sound journalism. They stretch the rules; thrive on sensationalism, and create news instead of reporting it. It's to this latter group that I remind you of your rights.

Should you be contacted by a news reporter and should you sense an uncertainty about the purpose and direction of the interview...well, exercise your rights. End the interview! Here's a script:

"Sir, when you first contacted me about this story, I felt that it was newsworthy. I felt that I could provide you with some information that would validate your premises. I now sense a new direction for this

interview, and I'll be candid. I'm uncomfortable with the questions that you're asking and the answers that you're seeking. Accordingly, I choose not to continue. Have a nice day."

Always cherish the rights, freedoms, and privileges that we have as Americans. For the purpose of this summary, always remember that freedom of the press does not supersede the freedom to speak...or, NOT.

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

American Academy of Pediatrics.

FUN IN THE SUN

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/tanning.htm>

Babies under 6 months:

- Avoiding sun exposure and dressing infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats are still the top recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn. However when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands.

For Young Children:

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside, and use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The SPF should be at least 15.

For Older Children:

- The first, and best, line of defense against the sun is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and avoid sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.



- Use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or greater. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen - about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.

HEAT STRESS IN EXERCISING CHILDREN

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/policy/re9845.html>

- The intensity of activities that last 15 minutes or more should be reduced whenever high heat and humidity reach critical levels.
- At the beginning of a strenuous exercise program or after traveling to a warmer climate, the intensity and duration of exercise should be limited initially and then gradually increased during a period of 10 to 14 days to accomplish acclimatization to the heat.
- Before prolonged physical activity, the child should be well-hydrated. During the activity, periodic drinking should be enforced, for example, each 20 minutes, 5 oz of cold tap water or a flavored sports drink for a child weighing 88 lbs, and 9 oz for an adolescent weighing 132 lbs, even if the child does not feel thirsty.
- Clothing should be light-colored and lightweight and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate evaporation of sweat. Sweat-saturated garments should be replaced by dry garments.

POOL SAFETY

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/family/tippool.htm>

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- Install a fence at least four-feet high around all four sides of the pool. The fence should not have openings or protrusions that a young child could use to get over, under, or through the fence.
- Make sure pool gates open out from the pool, and self-close



and self-latch at a height children can't reach.

- Keep rescue equipment (a shepherd's hook - a long pole with a hook on the end - and life preserver) and a portable telephone near the pool.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children a false sense of security.
- Children may not be developmentally ready for swim lessons until after their fourth birthday. Swim programs for children under 4 should not be seen as a way to decrease the risk of drowning.
- Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be within arm's length, providing "touch supervision."

BUG SAFETY

- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on your child.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- Avoid dressing your child in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- To remove a visible stinger from skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail.
- Insect repellents containing DEET are the most effective.
- The concentration of DEET in products may range from less than 10 percent to over 30 percent. The benefits of DEET reach a peak at a concentration of 30 percent, the maximum concentration currently recommended for infants and children. DEET should not be used on children under 2 months of age.
- The concentration of DEET varies significantly from product to product, so read the label of any product you purchase.



For more information on DEET:

<http://www.aapnews.org/cgi/content/full/e200399v1>

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/maytra.htm>

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/family/playgrd.htm>



- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface under and around the play equipment. Use at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high. If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high.
- Carefully maintain all equipment. Open "s" hooks or protruding bolt ends can be hazardous.
- Swing seats should be made of soft materials such as rubber, plastic or canvas.
- Make sure children cannot reach any moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part.
- Never attach-or allow children to attach-ropes, jump ropes, leashes, or similar items to play equipment; children can strangle on these.
- Make sure metal slides are cool to prevent children's legs from getting burned.
- Parents should never purchase a home trampoline or allow children to use home trampolines.
- Parents should supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe.



BICYCLE SAFETY

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/family/bicycle.htm>

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/family/tbikmyth.htm>

- Do not push your child to ride a 2-wheeled bike until he or she is ready, at about age 5 or 6. Consider the child's coordination and desire to learn to ride. Stick with coaster (foot) brakes until your child is older and more experienced for hand brakes.

- Take your child with you when you shop for the bike, so that he or she can try it out. The value of a properly fitting bike far outweighs the value of surprising your child with a new bike.
- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths, not just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride your bike, put on your helmet.
- When purchasing a helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard.
- A helmet protects your child from serious injury, and should always be worn. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.
- A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. The strap should be securely fastened, and you should not be able to move the helmet in any direction. If needed, the helmet's sizing pads can help improve the fit.

SKATEBOARD AND SCOOTER SAFETY

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/marskate.htm>

- Children should never ride skateboards or scooters in or near traffic.
- All skateboarders and scooter-riders should wear a helmet and other protective gear.
- Communities should continue to develop skateboard parks, which are more likely to be monitored for safety than ramps and jumps constructed by children at home.



LAWN SAFETY MOWER

Source:

<http://www.aap.org/family/tiplawn.htm>

- Try to use a



mower with a control that stops the mower from moving forward if the handle is let go.

- Children younger than 16 years should not be allowed to use ride-on mowers. Children younger than 12 years should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower wear hearing and eye protection.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers.

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Attn: Family Program Office
State House Station #33
Augusta, ME 04333-0033



Comments or suggestions for
upcoming newsletter features may be
directed to:

Robin Walsh

State Family Program Assistant

Robin.walsh@me.ngb.army.mil

1-800-581-9989, or 430-2132

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